

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
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THE EPISTLE

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December 2025

Pastor's Column

Hello, my friends,

Last Sunday, November 23, was a very special day in many ways. First, it was Christ the King Sunday, also known as Reign of Christ Sunday. This day marks the last day of the Christian year. The following Sunday begins Advent and a new Christian year. This transition is reflected in a new cycle of readings as we hear from another apostle about Christ through his community. This year, it is Matthew.

Incredibly, the Advent season is upon us, and Christmas is just five weeks away. The night grows darker, yet the multicoloured lights remind us that the light is not far off, and that is at the heart of Advent – knowing and waiting for something to happen, and that change is on the horizon. It's Hope and Faith working together, bound by Love. The Advent Season is a time to let us think about the world in a new way. To see the eyes of hope and transformation herald by the birth of Christ.

Today, there is a lot of uncertainty, as we find ourselves entering a season of hope, feeling a little less hopeful. However, we should not forget the world that existed a little over 2,000 years ago when Jesus was born. It was a world that had lost hope and connection—a world of conflicts, uncertainties and unfairness. A world that looked very much like our own.

We are not so different from those who awaited the newborn Messiah, a concept still beyond their grasp. Our difference is that we know the Messiah, the Light of the World. And it is at this time, when darkness deepens and seems unstoppable, that we are invited to look inward — not to hide, but to seek the light within and invite it outward.

Considering what's happening in the world, now is a good time to bring out the cheerful lights, enjoy some eggnog, and look forward to festive gatherings. Simple actions that manifest the Kingdom promised to us. When two or three gather in Christ's name, he is with us, and his light shines brightly. Be gentle with yourself as you cherish memories of the past in this Advent time, especially of those who have passed to Glory. They are with us in the circle of light and the embrace of Hope in Christ Jesus. We are not separated in the Body of Christ but only parted until we meet again.

May your Advent journey be blessed and filled with peace.

God's Blessings,
Pastor Nicolas

COUNCIL CORNER

Finding it a little awkward penning this December column halfway through November. December brings us to that all-important part of our church year- the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. I always wonder which season of celebration is more important to us: the birth of Jesus at Christmas or the resurrection of Jesus at Easter? I think it's a tie.... can't have one without the other. Hang on Greg, you have me thinking. To resurrect, you need to die, but you can't die unless you are born. Now... being born and resurrecting sound better than dying, but Jesus's death was important. So... I call it a 3-way tie, they are all linked. Hope everyone is enjoying the anticipation of the season celebrating Jesus's birth!

Back to business. Although Council continues to work through the mundane workings of our church building and staffing, we must give due credit to the hard work put forth by our call committee. Kudos to them as we look forward optimistically to an acceptance of our call to Pastor Erik Parker. An update as I am wiring this, we have had confirmation of Pastor Erik accepting our call. Well Greg, I don't know about you, but I'm excited about this gift from the Holy Spirit. I can hardly wait to unwrap and see what's inside. I just need to be patient until February or March. Now that's something I need to pray for.

Council has okayed continuance of our pulpit supply through February 2026 in the case of Pastor Erik not arriving until then.

A couple of other items of interest that Council has approved:

1. A significant maintenance project for our sanctuary piano
2. Approval of a Christmas Hamper Toy Drive that took place near the end of November
3. Congregational approval, by a special meeting, of roof maintenance for the walkway and sign board (project may be completed by this reading dependent on weather conditions).

May the peace of God be with you this upcoming holiday season. And may the gift of Jesus brighten each day!

Yours in Christ,

Greg and Cheryl

JESSE TREE DONATIONS

During the season of Advent, we will be setting up our Jesse Tree in the narthex.

We encourage you to bring your gifts of toques, mitts, scarves and socks.



Evangelical Lutheran Women (ELW)
December 2025

What's Coming Up?

November 29 (Saturday) at 10:00 am

Decorating the Hall and Sanctuary for Advent and Christmas together with the Altar Guild.

December 6 (Saturday) at 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

ELW Christmas Party Lunch / Program (at the Church). This will be a pot-luck lunch with a time for fellowship and a program.

The theme of the day is Gifts Come Down at Christmas. Do you remember a gift you gave or received that didn't involve a purchased gift? Something that was made or something that was done that made a big difference to you? If so, bring the story with you and hopefully we will have a number of stories to listen to.

If you would like to be part of the Prayer Buddy ministry, we will be establishing new Buddies for 2026. We establish Prayer Buddies (2 women make a team) and, as the name implies, you pray for each other throughout the year. You are encouraged to get to know each other better by talking on the phone, texting, emailing or meeting in person. You may want to recognize your Buddy on her birthday or on an anniversary or other celebrations throughout the year. A prayerful presence at a time of difficulty or worry would also be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in being a Buddy but will not be able to attend the Lunch party, speak with Sarolta or Linda.

An offering will be taken and will be donated and split equally between the Maple Ridge Salvation Army red kettle fund and the Friends in Need Food Bank.

January 3 (Saturday) at 10:00 am

De-decorating the hall and Sanctuary.- it is never as nice to take down Christmas as it is to put up but a necessary task. Many hands will make the work go quickly.

January 10 (Saturday) at 10:00 am (at Helen's – if you need directions, please give me a call)

ELW meeting to make our budget and make initial plans for 2026. Do you have an idea – we would love some new ideas.

January 17 (Saturday)

Next Ladies Lunch Out! We are hoping to meet at Ricky's at 11:30 – but if the time or place changes, we will announce it.

If you have any questions or want more information, please speak with me.

Linda, President



Heart Gifts

(a poem by Helen Steiner Rice)

It's not the things that can be bought
That are life's richest treasure,
It's just the little "heart gifts"
That money cannot measure ...
A cheerful smile, a friendly word,
A sympathetic nod
Are priceless little treasures
From the storehouse of our God.
They are the things that can't be bought
With silver or with gold,
For thoughtfulness and kindness
And love are never sold ...
They are the priceless things in life
For which no one can pay,
And the giver finds rich recompense
In giving them away.

Beckman House

Tuesday, December 16th we gather with the residents at Beckman House to share gifts and sing Christmas carols. We meet at their facility (corner of 216 St. and Dewdney Trunk Rd.) at 7 p.m. A wish list was put out in the narthex at our church so that individuals could sign up to buy a gift for a Beckman house resident.

We are suggesting that the total gift value be \$25 -\$30 in order to keep all the gifts equitable. Store gift receipts for clothing would be appreciated if possible. Gifts should be labelled: **from Santa**.

The deadline for purchasing gifts and dropping them off at the church is December 7th.

If you would like to be a part of our group that will go to Beckman House on December 16th, please contact the church. There are no restrictions in the number of individuals who can attend.





Advent - Christmas Schedule

Sunday, December 7th - Pastor Nic Alexandre

Sunday, December 14th – Pastor Vickie Wong

Sunday, December 21st - Pastor Nic Alexandre

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7:00 pm – Pastor Nic

Christmas Day: **No Service**

Sunday, December 28th – Pastor Kristina Breit

Church office will be closed:

Wednesday, December 24th – Friday, January 2nd

Wishing all people of St. Paul's congregation a Very Merry Christmas!





GIVE GIFTS FROM THE HEART THIS CHRISTMAS! ... Canadian Lutheran World Relief's new Gifts from the Heart catalogue has something to inspire and delight anyone on your list this year. It's full of meaningful, tangible gifts that will touch your loved ones and share God's love with the world! Copies are available on the narthex counter or you can shop online at clowr.org/GFTH.



Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath is probably the most popular symbol of Advent. Its bright candles dominate the wreath, as the Light of the World overcomes the darkness and warms a wintry world.

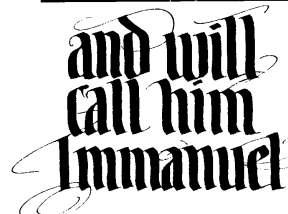
Advent is a time of expectation, and this is symbolized, not only by the four-week period of preparation, but also by the lighting of an Advent Candle on each Sunday of the season. The flame of each new candle reminds us, the worshipers, that something is happening, and something more is still to come.

This year we will be celebrating Advent by beginning each of the 4 Sundays in Advent with a candle-lighting ritual.

We will have our Advent wreath in the sanctuary, we also encourage you to have an Advent Wreath in your home if you are worshipping on Zoom. As we light the Advent candles in the church, we invite you to light the candles on your Advent Wreath.



CHRISTMAS OFFERING ENVELOPES...
 This year it was decided that the offerings received in the Christmas Envelopes (found on the table in the Narthex) will be Given to the Friends In Need Foodbank, unless otherwise designated.



C H R I S T M A S D A Y

